

New ERP cuts sawmaker's paperwork

Frank Brasier & Sons moves from selling to servicing

Frank Brasier started manufacturing saw blades in his basement. Today, his company, Brampton, Ont.-based Frank Brasier & Sons Ltd. is a one-stop shop that offers service and a varied product line.

"Diversification was essential to our survival and growth," says Christine Parravano, Brasier's granddaughter and CFO.

The company now distributes Canadian-made Hyd-Mech band saws, giving customers five free blades. This business model shift looks like a good idea—service revenue has increased from 5% to 40% in just five years and is expected to continue rising. More than 60% of the company's revenue is anticipated to come from service by 2008.

Critical to this revenue boost are technology improvements and the company's lean manufacturing initiative.

For 20 years Dave Airey, vice-president of sales and marketing for Mississauga, Ont.-based Optimizing Technology Inc. (OTI), has nurtured a technology consulting relationship with Frank Brasier.

Airey sees the company as a unique Canadian manufacturer, a combination of make-to-order (MTO) manufacturing, serial-numbered inventory and equipment repairs supported by "excellent" service.

OUT WITH THE OLD

OTI implemented the company's original ERP system in 1990. Needless to say, the time had come to upgrade the technology. "Adding new features to outdated technology would have been a wasted effort," says Airey.

The new system had to provide a direct data link to Excel, drill down from all XML reports and sort/filter/aggregate data to the grid. The system also had to send e-mails directly from the application using standard Windows/Network printers, user defined security and online documentation.

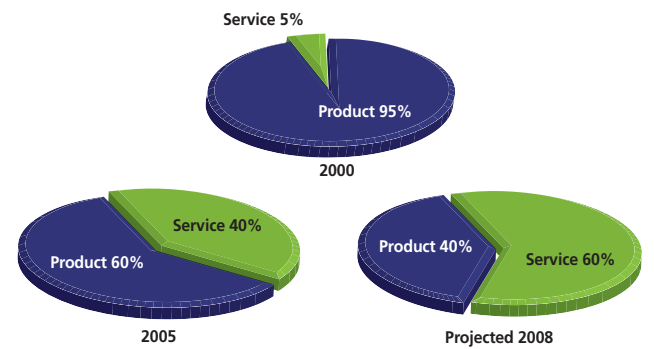
Airey recommended PRONTO-Xi as the ERP/CRM integrated system because its wide application range reduces dependency on multiple vendors.

With PRONTO-Xi, Parravano says her grandfather's company is quickly moving toward a paperless system. Lean efficiencies that are already quantifiable include:

- reduction in repetitive procedures;
- data is entered only once (versus three times on the old system);
- less data entry causes fewer errors; and
- tracking by serial number allows for comprehensive service records, sales records and the profitability of each machine.



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Frank Brasier & Sons service revenue has increased from 5% to 40% in five years, and is expected to reach 60% by 2008.

The first initiative to yield benefits is the CRM system, which helps the sales team track customer activity. Conversations, visits and future visits will be tracked while all sales orders, accounts receivable status, sales history, contact names and notes will be updated in real-time. The service module tracks the movement and repair history of equipment the company sells and services. Scheduling and managing the service calls and maintaining contracts using truck inventory provide ongoing benefits and profitability.

With a progressive lean manufacturing approach, commitment to diversification, while selling and servicing the customer, Frank Brasier & Sons, granddaughter and grandsons can look forward to a 100-year anniversary. *it*

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IT acronym quiz...

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ANSWERS:

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| <p>API: Application Program Interface</p> <p>APS: Advanced Planning & Scheduling</p> <p>ATO: Assemble to Order</p> <p>ATP: Available to Promise</p> <p>BMO: Bill of Material</p> <p>BPR: Business Process Re-engineering</p> <p>CAD: Computer Aided Design</p> <p>CCM: Customer Centric Manufacturing</p> <p>CIM: Computer Integrated Manufacturing</p> <p>CIO: Chief Information Officer</p> <p>CORBA: Common Object Request Broker Architecture</p> <p>CRM: Customer Relationship Management</p> <p>CTP: Capability to Promise</p> <p>DCOM: Distributed Component Object Model</p> <p>DNA: Distributed Internet Architecture</p> <p>DSS: Decision Support System</p> <p>EAI: Enterprise Application Integration</p> <p>EAM: Enterprise Asset Management</p> <p>ECO: Engineering Change Order</p> <p>EDI: Electronic Data Interchange</p> <p>EPS: Enterprise Production System</p> <p>ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning</p> <p>FTP: File Transfer Protocol</p> <p>HMI: Human Machine Interface</p> <p>IA: Industrial Automation</p> | <p>IS: Information System</p> <p>IT: Information Technology</p> <p>KPI: Key Performance Indicator</p> <p>LIMS: Laboratory Information Management System</p> <p>MES: Manufacturing Execution System</p> <p>MRP: Materials Resource Planning/Materials Requirement Planning</p> <p>OCS: Open Control System</p> <p>OLE: Object Linking and Embedding</p> <p>OPC: OLE for Process Control</p> <p>PAI: Plant Application Integration</p> <p>PAS: Process Automation System</p> <p>PCM: Production Centric Manufacturing</p> <p>PIMS: Process Information Management System</p> <p>PPM: Product Process Management</p> <p>ROA: Return on Assets</p> <p>ROI: Return on Investment</p> <p>SCADA: Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition</p> <p>SCE: Supply Chain Execution</p> <p>SCP: Supply Chain Planning</p> <p>SI: System Integrator</p> <p>SOP: Standard Operating Procedure</p> <p>TCO: Total Cost of Ownership</p> <p>VRML: Virtual Reality Markup Language</p> <p>WMS: Warehouse Management System</p> <p>XML: Extensible Markup Language</p> |
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